

# Comments & letters

N. F. F. ECHOES

It meant a great deal to the Canadian group to meet you and your dancers in St. Louis. Everyone looked forward to seeing your dancers and they certainly gave us a thrill. Congratulations on your presentation of the Minuets.

The Festival in St. Louis was truly an inspiration to us all, and isn't it encouraging to see how the Folk Dancing in the last few years has spread from the original group out to all walks of life. You folks in the United States are way ahead of us, but we will certainly try to make good use of your experience, because we feel that you are happy to share your experience and research in this field. When I think of our own dancers or the group that portrayed the Dutch, American Austrian dances I really feel we are getting somewhere and that the work is well justified. Last night I met with the group that went to St. Louis and there was a willingness to share with our own Folklore groups here at home what we had learned in St. Louis. Everyone felt that it was a privilege to have taken part in the Festival, and that it was a responsibility for them to do something here in Canada. You will be informed about our developments later.

Please give the warmest regards of the Folk Dancers, Betty and myself to the members of your two groups, and we hope that we may see you here at the farm in the near future.

THE JOHN MADSEN CANADIAN FOLK DANCERS

Yours sincerely,  
John A. Madsen  
Unionville, Canada



Jessie Polka Is NOT Lithuanian

"...By the way, in San Francisco (someone) taught the Jessie Polka a la Lithuanian polka step, which I thought was amusing. Somebody said to me that they hadn't realized it was a Lithuanian dance, and I told them I was sure it wasn't." (It sho ain't. That's my gripe about not being in character. VFB.)

Rachel Boone, Modesto, Cal.

## SQUARE DANCE ASSOCIATION OF WISCONSIN

Irene Qually

Here we come, with a rip and a snort, to give you notes and news gathered from all parts of the state!

A short resume of the April meetings in Waukesha. Harry Franson and Russel Schuetze and their committees did everything to make the meetings and jamboree a success, and we thank them for being such fine hosts. Mel. and Vic. presided over the Callers and SDAW Council meetings respectively and did a fine job of conducting them.

The SDAW Council meeting was opened by a prayer from the Reverend Aubrey Young of the Presbyterian Church of Waukesha. The pastor and his wife are square dancers. Martha Clark, Chaplain, stressed cooperation

and friendship and the fact that we really get to know each other through square dancing. Mr. and Mrs. George Hodas, representing F. O. E. El Promenade group of Manitowoc, presented the group's application for membership. It was approved by the screening committee, and Chet. Wangerin, Whitefish Bay, led the couple to the inner square for their official Welcome — a song by the delegates.

Hermine informed the group that the proceeds of the Madison jamboree were almost \$300. It was distributed in this way: \$100 to the Cancer Fund, \$100 to Friends of Service Overseas (those are my notes — though I think the title is not quite right), and \$93.66 is earmarked for use in promoting square dancing and helping groups by sending callers in the Madison area. Everyone was most gratified. In this connection, you will also be interested in knowing that the Waupaca jamboree on April 30 also brought in about \$300, which is all being contributed to their hospital fund, for the erection of a community hospital. We are very proud to have groups like this in our organization and gratified at the response of the dancers to these fine causes.

### COMMING EVENTS

#### JUNE 14: WAUBEKA

Free Outdoor and Indoor Jamboree in connection with Flag Day celebration, June 14.

#### JUNE 17: MILWAUKEE

Pious High School Gymnasium, 8:30 to 12:00 P. M. South 76th and W. Stevenson (1 block South of Blue Mound Road. New and air conditioned.

#### JUNE 18: UNION GROVE

Hoedown-benefit to purchase recreational equipment for the children at Wisconsin Southern Colony. 6:00 to 11:00 P. M. at Liggett's Royal Palms, Brown's Lake, just out of Burlington. Delegates at SDAW will have tickets or write Mrs. Harvey Stevens, Wisconsin Southern Colony, Union Grove. Hotel Burlington serves good food and you may make reservations direct with them for your party.

#### JUNE 25: RIPON

Ripon from 2:00 to 6:00 P. M. by Golden Slippers Jamboree at Senior High School gymnasium in Square Dance Club.

#### JULY 1: GREEN BAY

ANNUAL JAMBOREE

#### JULY 2: RHINELANDER

First Jamboree

#### JULY 15: WAUPUN

Jamboree

#### JULY 30: TWO RIVERS

Callers and SDAW Meetings and Jamboree

When Citizen Smith fell behind in his car payments, he began to get a steady stream of letters from the finance company. They were mild at first, but gradually they began to build up to a threatening crescendo. Finally came a letter intended to touch the man's sense of shame.

"Dear Mr. Smith," it began. "What would your neighbors think if we came and repossessed your car."

Back came this answer, which so far the finance company hasn't been able to top: "Dear Sirs, I took the matter up with my neighbors and they thing it would be a very lousy trick."

## OLD WORLD TRADITIONS .. IN LOUISIANA



None of our 48 states has a more colorful and romantic history than Louisiana, on the Gulf of Mexico where the great Mississippi River, the "Father of Waters," rolls out to sea. Of ever growing importance both commercially and industrially, this state in the "Deep South" still embodies some of the traditions of early French and Spanish settlers.

This European culture is nowhere more evident than in religious festivals and in the annual pre-Lenten festival of Mardi-Gras (literally "fat Tuesday"). The carnival takes place in New Orleans, principal city of Louisiana, and its celebration dates back more than a century and a quarter. Preparations are made for a whole year in advance and no effort or expense is spared to make it a beautiful and memorable occasion. The day itself, Shrove Tuesday, is preceded by a week of carnival, opening with a night parade. The swaying floats, shimmering with tinsel and streamers, move majestically down Canal Street, the widest thoroughfare in the country. Each float depicts a different subject. On Shrove Tuesday comes the grand climax, the Parade of Rex, the "king" who reigns over the carnival. A large proportion of the population don masks and costumes for this event. By sundown, masks must be laid aside. The next day, Ash Wednesday, the fasting and prayers of Lent begin.

The people of Louisiana are deeply devoted to other traditions, such as the custom of decorating graves on All Saint's Day, November 1. Protestants as well as Catholics follow this custom. State and city offices and banks close, and many business places give employees time off to go to the cemeteries to "put out flowers." The day before All Saint's Day — Halloween, October 31 — whole families go to the cemeteries to clean and beautify the family plots. That night, or on the morning of All Saint's Day, the graves and tombs are decorated with flowers, chrysanthemums being the favorite. By noon on November 1, crowds are thick in New Orleans' thirty cemeteries. Many go from one cemetery to another to see floral displays.

Another religious festival widely observed in New Orleans (by those of Italian descent and Roman Catholic faith) is St. Joseph's Day, March 19. Sometimes referred to as Mi-Careme (Mid-Lent), St. Joseph's Day originated in Sicily and has long been celebrated by Italians. In the United States, the day is nowhere celebrated with more enthusiasm than in New Orleans. There Americans of Italian origin fill the churches on the morning of March 19. After church they visit the elaborate St. Joseph altars that have been built in homes and the evening is gay with parties and dancing. However, the merriment ends promptly at midnight. Observation of Lent is resumed, and the fasting and penance begin again.

Louisiana's links with the Old World are revealed



A couple from Club Metros performing "The Bride of Fire" from the Caucasian "republic of Azerbaidjan."

in other areas of its life. Its local government units are known as parishes (instead of counties, as in the other states). This system is based on the old ecclesiastical division used by the Spaniards. The civil law of the state is based on old Spanish law and on the Code Napoleon of France (instead of an English common law, as in other states). Thousands of persons in Southern Louisiana speak only French. In this part of the state, there are miles of bayous (sluggish streams that are inlets of bays or rivers), where the population lives in houseboats or on the water's edge and people travel almost everywhere by boat. In the parish of Acadia live the Acadians, descendants of the French Canadians whom the British expelled from Nova Scotia in 1755 and who eventually found their way to Louisiana. They speak a soft patois and are known locally as "Cajuns."

Louisiana came under French rule in 1862 when the explorer La Salle took possession of the Lower Mississippi Valley in the name of French and built a fort at the mouth of the great river. He called the region Louisiana after his king, Louis XIV. By 1673 other French explorers had taken possession of the entire Mississippi Valley. Colonization began late in the same century. In 1716 New Orleans was founded and named for the Duke of Orleans, then regent of France. For many years it was the most important French outpost in the New World.

In 1762, France ceded its territory west of the Mississippi, including New Orleans, to Spain. Napoleon regained it for France by secret treaty in 1800, to further his ambition for a colonial empire in America. Then, fearing an invasion of France by the English, he sold the territory in 1803 to the United States for \$15 million. This transaction is known as the Louisiana Purchase. In 1812 a portion of these lands was admitted to the Union as the state of Louisiana.

New Orleans, the principal city of Louisiana, is the second largest port in the country. It is really two cities. One is a busy modern metropolis with skyscrapers, factories and fine residential districts; the other is an ancient city known as the French Quarter, or Vieux Carre (Old Quadrangle). (Common Council)